UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1998/272
27 March 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 27 MARCH 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to draw to your attention the text of a statement on Kosovo agreed by the members of the Contact Group at their meeting in Bonn on 25 March 1998 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Bill RICHARDSON

Annex

Statement on Kosovo issued by members of the Contact Group in Bonn on 25 March 1998

1. We, the Foreign Ministers of Contact Group countries, together with the Deputy Chairman in Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Chairman in Office's personal representative for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the European Union Special Representative, the High Representative and the representatives of the European Commission met in Bonn on 25 March to review developments in Kosovo and to follow up decisions reached at our 9 March London meeting.

2. In London, we called upon President Milosevic to take rapid and effective steps to end the violence in Kosovo and commit himself to a political solution through unconditional dialogue. We adopted an action plan to advance these goals, decided on a series of concrete measures, and agreed to reconsider these measures if President Milosevic took the steps required by the Contact Group.

3. We insist that an urgent start be made in the process of unconditional dialogue with the leadership of the Kosovar Albanian community, involving federal and republic levels of government. Neither party should attempt to predetermine the outcome. We expect President Milosevic to implement the process of unconditional dialogue and to take political responsibility for ensuring that Belgrade engages in serious negotiations on Kosovo's status.

4. Today we have reviewed the situation in Kosovo, including the degree of compliance by President Milosevic, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Serbian authorities with the requirements of the London statement.

5. Since our meeting in London, there has been progress in some areas of concern, notably, some movement in Belgrade's position on dialogue on a range of issues, including the autonomy of Kosovo and the conclusion of the long-overdue agreement on implementation of the education accord.

6. Our overall assessment is that further progress by Belgrade on certain points in paragraphs 6 and 7 of the London statement requiring action by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Serbian governments is necessary. Therefore, we have agreed to maintain and implement the measures announced on 9 March, including seeking adoption by 31 March of the arms embargo resolution currently under consideration in the United Nations Security Council. We call upon President Milosevic again to implement fully all the relevant steps in the London statement.

7. We demand that authoritative delegations from both sides convene rapidly in order to agree upon a framework for a substantive negotiation process and agree to the participation in the negotiating process of an outside representative or representatives. We will accept no pretext for delaying such a process. We affirm the willingness of the Contact Group to facilitate talks, recognizing that international engagement in support of dialogue is essential to the achievement of a political solution.

8. We agree that the Contact Group will meet again in four weeks' time to reassess the situation. Our assessment and subsequent decision will take account of a report on compliance to be submitted to the Contact Group by the Troika of OSCE, if they agree to our request to prepare such a report. If President Milosevic takes the steps specified in London, we will reconsider existing measures, including action in the Security Council, to terminate the arms embargo. If Belgrade fails to meet the London Benchmarks, and if the dialogue does not get under way within the next four weeks because of the position of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia or Serbian authorities, we shall take steps to apply further measures as announced in London.

9. Unless the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia takes steps to resolve the serious political and human rights issues in Kosovo, there is no prospect of any improvement in its international standing. On the other hand, concrete progress to resolve the serious political and human rights issues in Kosovo will improve the international position of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and prospects for normalization of its international relationships and full rehabilitation in international institutions. We urge President Milosevic to cooperate fully with the mission of Mr. Felipe González as the Personal Representative of Chairman-in-Office of OSCE and Special Representative of the European Union. Once the González mission is under way, it will certainly be possible to address the potential for participation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the work of OSCE.

10. We take this opportunity to reaffirm our strong opposition to all terrorist actions. Violence does not contribute to the search for a solution in Kosovo. This applies equally to Serbian police and Kosovar Albanian extremists. We will use all appropriate elements of pressure and influence with both sides to ensure that violence does not escalate and that the serious dispute over Kosovo's status between Belgrade and the Kosovar Albanian community is resolved strictly through peaceful means. We urge those outside the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia who are supplying financial support, arms or training for terrorist activity in Kosovo to cease doing so immediately.

11. We welcome Dr. Rugova's clear commitment to non-violence and urge others in the leadership of the Kosovar Albanian community to make their opposition to violence and terrorism both clear and public. Belgrade authorities cannot, however, justify their repression and violence in Kosovo in the name of anti-terrorist activities. We repeat that the way to combat terrorism is for Belgrade to offer the Kosovar Albanian community a genuine political process.

12. We applaud the work of Sant'Egidio and of the 3+3 commission in reaching agreement on measures to implement the 1996 Education Agreement. We call upon all sides to ensure that implementation proceeds smoothly and without delay, according to the agreed timetable. We are considering what assistance we can provide to facilitate implementation. We will also consider measures if either party blocks implementation. We urge all sides to cooperate with Sant'Egidio in efforts to reduce tensions in other social sectors as well.

13. The fundamental position of the Contact Group remains the same. We support neither independence nor the maintenance of the status quo as the end result of negotiations between the Belgrade authorities and the Kosovo Albanian leadership

on the status of Kosovo. Without prejudging what that result may be, we base the principles for a solution to the Kosovo problem on the territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and on OSCE standards, the Helsinki principles, and the Charter of the United Nations. Such a solution must also take into account the rights of the Kosovar Albanians and all those who live in Kosovo. We support a substantially greater degree of autonomy for Kosovo which must include meaningful self-administration.